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GOETHE'S MÄRCHEN:¹

A POLITICO-NATIONAL CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE POET.

BY DR. HERMANN BAUMGART.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY ISAAC N. JUDSON.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER IV.

The river over which the Ferryman carries the Will-o'-wisps is swollen to overflowing.

More unfavorable than formerly, the events of the time flow by and separate the nation by a broad obstruction from the goal of its best internal strivings. Although the established forms of government, I might say the existing provisional government (Nothstaat), are still so estranged from these strivings and needs, and so utterly indifferent to them, nevertheless, in so far as they

¹ From "The Diversions (Unterhaltungen) of German Emigrants" (see translation in Bohn's Library). These emigrants were the French nobility (émigrés) fleeing from the French Revolution. The reader of this Journal will remember the interpretation of this Märchen ("The Story of the Snake") by Rosenkranz, published in Volume V, and will welcome this explanation of Baumgart, which seems to hit the very thoughts of Goethe himself. Of course every one has read the marvellous rendering of "The Tale," by Thomas Carlyle. It is one of those literary works which should be read once a year, through life.—EDITOR.

maintain intercourse and the connection of the whole, they further their interests, even if they do so involuntarily and unwillingly. And so the state even promotes intercourse with that bank on which the fair Lily is; however, as it is serviceable in spreading ideas only in a mechanical way, it cannot bring over any one from the opposite bank; of itself it cannot create new thoughts, and is not interested in the least degree in arousing them.

But the Ferryman does not carry the Will-o'-wisp over the river to the bank where they begin their eager work without the fare which is due him. At this point Goethe has introduced a deep, fine, and still very simple reference. The Will-o'-wisps—who during the passage have behaved in a very restless manner, so that the old man begins to fear that the boat may capsize—in order to reward him, shake down into the wet boat a mass of glittering gold pieces.

“‘For Heaven’s sake, what are you about?’ cried the old man; ‘you will ruin me forever! Had a single piece got into the water, the stream, which cannot suffer gold, would have risen in horrid waves and swallowed both my skiff and me; and who knows how it might have fared with you in that case? Here, take back your gold.’

“‘We can take nothing back which we have once shaken from us,’ answer the Lights.

“‘Then you give me the trouble,’ said the old man, ‘of raking them together and carrying them ashore and burying them.’”

Is an explanation required here?

The literature of enlightenment, which so misleads the vulgar, lightly shaking down and carelessly spreading everywhere its shining and blinding thoughts, and which makes the old stewards of the ship of state so greatly to fear lest the boat capsize, and lest the times may not endure the poisonous food! And so they take the trouble to carefully guard the dangerous new thoughts and to lock them up—so far, indeed, as it is possible for them to do so.

Although the Will-o'-wisps are on the other bank, they cannot go on their way till they have paid the fare which they owe. “‘You must know that I am only to be paid with fruits of the earth.’ ‘With fruits of the earth? We despise them and have never tasted them.’ The Lights were making off with jests; but they felt themselves, in some inexplicable manner, fastened to the

ground; it was the most unpleasant feeling they had ever had. They engaged to pay him his demand as soon as possible; he let them go and pushed away."

The meaning seems to me very plain and pertinent.

Every new thought that is brought into circulation is practically dead and ineffectual so long as it cannot satisfy an actual want of the time; so long as it does not afford immediate nourishment to the masses of the nation it does not exist for them, and is chained to the ground. It is, in truth, one of the most unpleasant feelings for the originators of such ideas, especially if political influence is their sole aim: Science can endure it, and is even relieved from paying the toll. The new ideas of enlightenment, also, are not immediately concerned about their efficiency; still they are not for this reason exempt from the fare. First of all they are concerned only for themselves, and have a great longing for the fair Lily; it is characteristic that they have come from the bank where she dwells without knowing it, and that they imagine her to be on the opposite shore. We shall see later how they pay their debt.

In the chasm in which the old man seeks to conceal the gold of the Will-o'-wisp the fair green Snake takes possession of it. It melts in her inwards and spreads through her whole body; from it she becomes luminous; long ago she had been told that this was possible. Everything appears to her more beautiful and enchanting through her own graceful light. "Every leaf seemed of emerald, every flower was dyed with new glory." She is now for the first time impelled to leave the lonely mountain-places in which she had hitherto remained, and to venture forth to find the source of the new light.

"The toil of crawling through bog and reeds gave her little thought; for though she liked best to live in dry, grassy spots of the mountains, among the clefts of rocks, and for the most part fed on spicy herbs, and slaked her thirst with mild dew and fresh spring-water, yet, for the sake of this dear gold and in the hope of this glorious light, she would have undertaken anything you could propose to her."

Let me here remind the reader of what I said before of the condition of German literature at the middle of the last century, and of its peculiar devotion to descriptions of nature, which, how-

ever, at first lacked intrinsic beauty. The general elevation and refinement of taste which are brought about by external influences profited it also, and it now at last succeeded in freely following its natural bias toward an observation of nature, which was poetically glorified, artistically perfected, and at the same time deeply genuine. Even before a striving after the noble and spiritual was characteristic of it, and many a beauty was familiar to it, it moved about in an ideal, abstract world, like the Snake "who slaked her thirst with mild dew and spring-water." She now left the grassy spots of the mountains in the hope of the glorious light, and minded not the toil of crawling through bog and reeds: in this picture is pointed out that movement of the German popular literature when, aroused by the ideas of the new enlightenment, which worked immediately and practically, it now abandoned the sphere of abstract reverie, and was no longer blind to the fact that the goal of truth and beauty can only be attained in the toilsome mastery of the objects and tasks of real life.

Now comes the conversation with the Will-o'-wisp, the pride of "the gentlemen of the vertical line," and the discomfiture of the Snake, for "let her hold her head as high as possible, she found she must bend it to earth again would she stir from the spot"; then the mischievous generosity of the Lights, by which the Snake profits so well ("her splendor began visibly increasing; she was really shining beautifully, while the Lights in the meantime had grown rather lean and short"); finally the circumstance that it is the Snake who shows the Will-o'-wisps the way to the fair Lily and makes the bridge for them. It is not possible to touch upon all the hundred-fold references which lie here in every word. But is it too much to say that there is here a perfect resemblance to the course of the development of our literature, which was described above? How, under the influence of the spirit of enlightenment of the century, which affects it so powerfully, it leaves the regions of abstract theory and sentiment, in which it had so long moved about, lonely and exclusive, self-sufficient but somewhat heavy, already of noticeable beauty, but not yet transparent and luminous; and minds not the difficulty of turning to real life; and how the promise that the time is at hand is at last fulfilled in it, and how, through the unfolding of its own glorious inner nature, it becomes capable of performing the great-

est tasks. Is it incorrect to say that the true, artistic allegory here completely meets that high demand which was laid down above; that, while figures and thoughts mutually throw light upon each other, the latter should stand forth in ever greater distinctness, and the former in ever greater beauty? It requires here a great effort to restrict one's self in interpretation.

The *Märchen*, being developed entirely from the nature of the characters, moves forward in the manner of an epic poem, the significance of its contents becoming at the same time continually greater.

As literature had now attained to an ever-increasing internal beauty and clearness, it straightway felt in itself the earnest desire to turn its attention to the greatest tasks of the nation, of which before it had dimly felt many an anticipation, but of which it had had as yet no clear and open view.

"She now believed herself capable of illuminating these things by her own light, and hoped to get acquainted with them at once." She hastens by the usual way to the subterranean temple with the images of the kings.

The meaning cannot be doubtful to one who yields assent to what has been already said; the happily chosen figure, by continually bringing to view new phases of the resemblance, is confirmed in the best manner.

Literature, seeking its way gropingly, first turns its attention in poetical anticipation to patriotic and historical ideas, and becomes acquainted with their venerable outlines; then, aroused by the political movement of the age, it undertakes to bring a clear light upon these things for itself. Is it necessary to remind the reader how in the seventies and eighties of the last century such a union and mutual penetration of poetical and historical endowments was exhibited in *one* man of the nation; how powerful an influence the poems of *Herder* had upon the development of historical knowledge, while, on the other hand, his historical works moved so completely in the æsthetic and poetical direction of those days; how the vaguely dreaming patriotism of a Klopstock and of the whole choir of bards now began to bear fruit, while men were no longer content to sing of Hermann the Cherusker, but rather began to direct their efforts to lighting up the dark regions of former times and to scrutinizing the events of the past in the light of the pres-

ent? It was, however, precisely the holy soil which had once witnessed the great battles of the Romans which now produced the first investigator who united to a sympathetic and imaginative perception of the German past the exact labor of the experienced man of business and the scholar—*Justus Möser*.

Thus it was pertinent to represent in a sensible figure this process, how the history of the past begins to be exhibited in literature in synoptical grouping and in definite form. However, there is still another thing which necessarily exercised a vital influence upon this representation.

Those beginnings of political and historical investigation were far removed from a strictly scientific objectivity. On the other hand, as they had been aroused and influenced by the question of the best form of government, they continually pursued this aim, to find immediately in the study of the past the solution of the riddle of the present. It might be said that the time worked itself with all its might into the error of thinking that the happiness of nations could be established if the question of the best form of government were successfully answered. Let us now accompany the Snake into the temple; then all riddles will solve themselves.

Here sit enthroned in their niches the four Kings, the types of German kingship, following and at the same time supplementing one another; for, indeed, it need not be said that the separation of these conceptions exists only in the representation. The Märchen gives the names of the first three: they are Wisdom, Appearance, and Strength; the fourth is an inorganic mixture of these three. Now, it is evident that in the true monarchy these three principles must be intimately and inseparably united, and, further, that at no step in the development of monarchy can one of them be thought altogether wanting; however, in different phases of the kingship they predominate in different proportions.

The golden king—the royal dignity in its oldest and most venerable form, the patriarchal kingship—“In size beyond the stature of a man, but by its shape the likeness of a little rather than a tall person.” The Snake points out light to him as the grandest thing and speech as the most refreshing: by this is meant that with this monarch the means of gentle persuasion and of enlightening instruction stand highest.

The Snake then turns to the silver king, whom the *Märchen* names *Appearance*: here we have the majesty which is consecrated by a long duration of legitimate tradition, whose power rests upon inherited authority, and which is held within the bounds of moderation and justice by the proud consciousness of exalted worth. "His shape was long and rather languid; he was covered with a decorated robe; crown, girdle, and sceptre were adorned with precious stones; the cheerfulness of pride was in his countenance; he seemed about to speak, when a vein, which ran dimly colored over the marble wall, on a sudden became bright and diffused a cheerful light throughout the whole temple. By this light the Snake perceived a third king made of brass, and sitting mighty in shape, leaning on his club, adorned with a laurel garland, and more like a rock than a man."

Out of the opened wall enters the Man with the Lamp, who stands for the idea of Science. It is noticeable that he first enters with the still flame of his lamp when the silver king is being scrutinized. I take the meaning to be as follows: Long before in the popular literature the picture of the antiquity of the German people had arisen in golden light; in poetical transfiguration and in a certain sort of *a priori* construction, which was peculiar to those times, men had by degrees formed for themselves definite conceptions of the earliest history of our nation. On the soil thus prepared historical investigation then arose, which for later times could not be dispensed with.

"'Why comest thou, since we have light?' asked the golden king of the old man. 'You know that I may not enlighten what is dark,' was the answer," which is intelligible enough. Still, poetry has everywhere cleared the way for knowledge.

"'Will my kingdom end?' asked the silver king. 'Late or never,' answered the old man." It was a golden age when Wisdom reigned, revered for itself; later generations needed the outward splendor of majesty, which, as a visible sign, must cause them to see the necessity of valuing internal greatness. Late or never will the time come when the conscious recognition of moral and intellectual superiority will make the outward signs and attributes of majesty unnecessary. "With a strong voice the brazen king began to ask, 'When shall I arise?' 'Soon,' answered the old man." The last question touches directly upon what take

place in the Märchen. Power had slept too long in the German Empire. Since the nation's consciousness of its own existence is becoming ever stronger in the anticipations of poetry and in the results of investigation, since the lights of both unite to thoroughly illuminate for it the temple of its history, the time cannot be far distant when, armed in brass, it will go forth to laurel-crowned victory.

And with whom shall this crushing power combine? “‘With thy elder brothers,’ answered the old man to the brazen king.” *Wisdom* and *true majesty*, combined with *armed strength*—this is the promise to the German Empire in regard to its future form of government, the fulfilment of which Science was preparing in the depths of its workshops.

“‘What will the youngest do?’ asked the king.

“‘He will sit down,’ replied the old man.

“‘I am not tired,’ cried the fourth king, with a rough, faltering voice. He stood leaning on a pillar; his considerable form was heavy rather than beautiful, an inorganic mixture of the metals of his brothers, of unpleasant aspect.”

Here is seen a striking picture of the condition of the German Empire in its last days: still great in stature, but how heavy! not wanting in gold, silver, and brass in the structure of its limbs, but, alas! not united inwardly, powerfully, and in conformity with a cast; but obstructing, confusing, bound together in unholy strife, and still not bound. The old man announces its end, which comes to pass in the Märchen in a tragi-comic manner, as it did later in reality; this end, however, it might still have averted in spite of its impotent clumsiness.

The old man speaks to the three kings of three secrets; the most important of these is the open one, which consists in this: that all these hidden things have already come to light. Every one knows it, but only the superior observer, who bears the light of knowledge in his hand, sees already the mighty consequences which must follow in the near future.

“‘I know the fourth,’ said the Snake, approached the old man, and hissed something in his ear.

“‘The time is at hand!’ cried the old man with a strong voice. The temple reëchoed, the metal statues sounded; and that instant the old man sank away to the westward and the Snake to the

eastward ; and both of them passed away through the clefts of the rocks with the greatest speed."

To the discoveries which Science wins and quietly guards must be added the impulse to action, which constrains men to fashion them to practical ends. This is precisely the service which popular literature and the press have ever had to render in times of preparation for great world-events ; this is the means of communication which makes the bridge from their realm to the other bank, where the mass of the people dwell. This is *the fourth secret*, that this literature, moved by a new impulse, has now entered upon a new phase—to open the eyes of the people. The time is ripe ! For the first time the mighty word is spoken by scientific knowledge.

It is in accordance with the epical character of the *Märchen* that now, during the clash at the mighty close of the conversation, the scene correspondingly changes.

Truly no further word is needed to make clear the significance of the old man. "He was dressed like a peasant, and carried in his hand a little lamp, on whose still flame you liked to look, and which in a strange manner, without casting any shadow, enlightened the whole dome."

It would be a waste of words to carry out the parallels. But further : "All the passages through which the old man travelled filled themselves, immediately behind him, with gold ; for his lamp had the strange property of changing stone into gold, wood into silver, dead animals into precious stones, and of annihilating all metals ; but to display this power it must shine alone. If another light were beside it, the lamp only cast from it a pure, clear brightness, and all living things were refreshed by it.

Beautiful and significant ! When Science works for itself alone, all objects receive under its treatment a like high value. What in life possesses an imaginary worth is destroyed as such, and subjected to its decomposing analysis ; on the other hand, what is most important in life gains under its hand priceless worth ; the stone becomes gold, the wood silver. But the most precious thing to Science is the organic body ; just when life has passed from it, it changes it into precious stone, in which it knows how to discover the most wonderful forces. Again, through it all things, laying aside their accidental and imperfect forms, assume those

which are regular and essential, and thus become beautiful ; at the end of the Märchen also this is displayed as the miraculous power of the lamp. But how glorious is its failure even ! When the lamp shines beside another light—that is, when Science does not work exclusively for the fulfilment of its own ends, but joins with knowledge arising from other sources, whether from life, art, or religion—then it constantly emits a pure, clear brightness, and all living things are thereby refreshed.

I come now to a part of the Märchen in which the form of words chosen by Goethe seems at first somewhat surprising, though the feeling passes away with closer study. I refer to the figure of the old Woman and the part of the narrative which relates to her. The perplexities which here for the first time present themselves to the exact understanding vanish the more readily as the lightly ironical tone, which here for the first time prevails, allows toward the end the deep earnestness and the splendid conception of the ground-thought to be more successfully developed.

I said above that it would be shown later how the Will-o'-wisps succeeded in paying the fare which they owed the Ferryman. The point in question is : In what manner and in what sphere did those new ideas, of which the Will-o'-wisps appear as bearers, succeed in gaining admission into the nation and obtaining a firm foothold there, through the actual satisfaction of an immediate, practical need ? This was the meaning of the field and garden fruits which were demanded as fare for the passage. This time let us pass outside of the actual circumstances. To speak briefly : While in France the new ideas of the philosophic century became effectual in religion and politics at the same time—since abuses which had to be attacked had grown up there in both spheres and were absolutely inseparable—in Germany, on the other hand, the spirit of enlightenment won its first victories, particularly in the sphere of the Church, and began afterward to extend its influence to political affairs. Religion did, in fact, pay the toll for the bringing in of the new ideas into Germany. However, the deeply felt need of the nation could not be fully satisfied in this wise.

Rather did that movement remain incomplete—and we shall find in the Märchen references to this fact of surprising insight

and depth—and the satisfaction of the wishes of the nation for a thorough reform of religion remained thrust into the background; for a new superstition, different in form from the old but akin to it in spirit—since it arose from the same shortsightedness and superficiality—followed fast upon the heels of the new philosophical rationalism, and deprived the movement of a part of its desired results. It is sufficient to refer in a word to how the religious reform of the last century shows itself in so many ways enfeebled and stunted, on the one side by the degeneration of the radical rationalism, and on the other by those manifold mystical, theosophical, and thoroughly absurd excesses, at the appearance of which, here as well as there, thoughtlessness and credulity, mania for the miraculous and scepticism, formed their old alliance.

As was said before, the *Märchen* assumes in this part the tone of light irony which Goethe was fond of displaying in matters pertaining to the Church in spite of the earnest and deep reverence of his character.

It seems to me that the old Woman, the wife of the Man with the Lamp—who, at the end of the *Märchen*, made young for a thousand years, enters into the league with him, who is on good terms with the Lily, but, above all, is not presented without many significant traits of old age, and many, though excusable, absurdities—is the figure which Goethe chose to represent religious ideas as they existed in the mass of the people in the last century. That is, however, by no means a degrading picture which makes religion the wife of knowledge, who, of equal birth with him, possesses by feeling and intuition what Science must investigate and prove. To be sure, these religious forms appear here needing the rejuvenating new birth; but it was a great and beautiful thought to represent this reform as necessarily coincident with the political regeneration of the nation.

The old man finds his wife sobbing over the impudence of the Will-o'-wisps. She had at first received them with pleasure, but afterward they had annoyed her in a shameful manner, even to licking up the gold from the walls, the stones of which she had not seen in a hundred years. This tasted better to them than ordinary gold. It made them broader and brighter, and immediately they shook down a pile of gold pieces about themselves;

and the faithful Mops of the old Woman ate a few of the coins, and now, to her great sorrow, lies dead in the chimney.

The narrative is to be referred in every particular to the enlightenment of the Church. The new ideas, at first most gladly welcomed, soon make themselves very obnoxious to the Church; and there is great grief for the gold which is brushed down from the old walls. On the other hand, how striking it is that the spirit of enlightenment, though it fights against religious ideas, yet draws from them a great part of its strength, which afterward it continues to display in most generous fashion! But there are in the household of the popular Church things which cannot endure this carelessly scattered food. Once more it sounds at first strange, and seems perhaps somewhat sacrilegious to say that Goethe meant by the faithful, beloved Mops of the old Woman the popular belief in miracles. And yet this idea also wins an entirely different and an earnest aspect when we follow the course of the narrative further.

The Lamp changes the dead animal into the most beautiful onyx, which the fair Lily endows with life; and he becomes her dear playmate; and, what is more, among the concurrent signs of misfortune, which, nevertheless, are shown to point to a near and great happiness, he is made especially prominent. Here also the interpretation receives full confirmation.

The faith which perishes in the people becomes as myth a precious object in the hands of Science.

This happened in many ways during the last century in connection with biblical ideas which became the object of scientific and particularly of æsthetic treatment in the same proportion as they ceased to be influential as actual beliefs. Let one recall Herder's "*Geist der ebräischen Poesie*" and Goethe's Bible studies. Indeed, when the Bible began to be studied from this point of view, poetry received on this side a marked enrichment and impulses which were rich in results. How simply and significantly is this fact brought out in the *Märchen*, which makes the lamp send the precious stone to the fair Lily, who endows it with life!—those ideas departing from life, fall to Science, who harmoniously orders them according to the laws of form inherent in them and then hands them over to Art, from whom they now obtain a second life.

However, the old man praises his wife for having promised the Will-o'-wisp to pay the fare for them: "Thou mayest do them that civility, for they perchance may be of use to us again." Filled with great and far-reaching thoughts, he already sees in the present supposed misfortune the preparation for the coming salvation. Therefore, as he is sending the onyx to the fair Lily by his wife, he also sends her word: "She should not mourn; her deliverance is near; the greatest misfortune she may look upon as the greatest happiness, for the time is at hand."

The old Woman sets out with the onyx and the fruits which are intended for the river.

"Whatever lifeless thing she was carrying, she felt not the weight of it. On the other hand, the basket in those cases rose aloft and hovered along above her head; but to carry any fresh herbage or any little living animal she found exceedingly laborious." This also is no arbitrary, meaningless invention. The organic, living thing and the fruits of the earth are symbolic of a force engaged in practical activity and affording immediate nourishment to the needy. On the other hand, the dead thing which makes the basket rise and freely hover along refers to an abstract, theoretical possession. It is truly characteristic of Goethe to point out that in the Church what really demands effort, and therefore merits acceptance, is not found in the dogmatic system, but in the smallest living deed.

To what follows in the *Märchen* I alluded when I said that the religious renovation was stunted by new vagaries of the imagination, which arose in it naturally and necessarily, and so was able to make good to the nation only a part of the anticipated results. The Giant takes his share from the fruits intended for the Ferryman without the woman's being able to prevent it; and the Ferryman accepts the insufficient fare only on condition that she pledge herself to the river for what is lacking. Her hand dipped in the river becomes black in token of the pledge and begins to disappear. The old Woman, greatly distressed on observing this, receives the following answer: "For the present it but seems so; if you do not keep your word it may become so in earnest. The hand will gradually diminish and at length disappear altogether, though you have the use of it as formerly. Everything as usual you will be able to perform with it, only nobody will see it."

"I had rather that I could not use it and no one could observe the want," cried the old Woman. "But what of that? I will keep my word and rid myself of this black skin and all anxieties about it."

The Church is not, indeed, injured in her nature by the reception of the enlightening spirit (thus the gold which the Will-o'-wisp brush down is restored again by the lamp), but in her anxiety to give what is promised the people by the new ideas she is impeded by the irresistible giant power of the old superstition, and so remains indebted for that demand of the time and also bears outwardly the marks of this debt. It is, moreover, a finely ironical and yet an earnest and thoughtful point that the old Woman, the representative of the Church, declares that she finds it harder to forget the damage to her beauty than to suffer a real loss in her power to work. In reality, however, even if the outward appearance entirely vanish, the power of the idea which lies beneath it cannot perish.

The narrative now approaches its crisis. The beautiful Youth presents himself to the old Woman. "His breast was covered with a glittering coat of mail in whose wavings every motion of his fair body might be traced."

"From his shoulders hung a purple cloak, around his uncovered head flowed abundant brown hair in beautiful locks; his graceful face and well-formed feet were exposed to the scorching of the sun. With bare soles he walked composedly over the hot sand, and a deep inward sorrow seemed to blunt him against all external things." The sorrowful Genius of the German nation is meant, whose ability to act is maimed in the search after the ideal of truth and beauty. Great events and the concurrence of great circumstances are needed to arouse it to a new life and higher deeds. "What is to live forever in song must perish in life," sings the poet. This utter ruin would have been the fate of the spirit of the German nation if it had become henceforth only a subject for Art to remember and celebrate. The death which the touch of the fair Lily brings seems almost more desirable to the young man than the unsatisfied longing for union with her, which feeling destroys all other powers. To bring out the meaning no word need here be added to the words of the Märchen. "Behold me," said the Youth to the woman; "at my years, what a miserable fate

have I to undergo! This mail which I have honorably borne in war, this purple which I have sought to merit by a wise reign, destiny has left me; the one as a useless burden, the other as an empty ornament. Crown and sceptre and sword are gone, and I am as bare and needy as any other son of earth, for so unblessed are her bright eyes that they take from every living creature they look on its force, and those whom the touch of her hand does not kill are changed to the state of shadows wandering alive."

I have already taken occasion to speak more fully of this figure of the crippling and even death-bringing power of the ideal. Here let it suffice merely to select from what follows a significant passage, which confirms and completes the interpretation which I have given above: "He inquired narrowly about the Man with the Lamp, about the influence of the sacred light, appearing to expect much good from it in his melancholy case."

With what mighty strides and with what salutary influence did Science encroach upon that all too eager solicitude of the German genius, and how much good service did it render in preparing the way for the final reconstruction!

Both travellers—the old Woman and the Youth—tread now the majestic arch of the bridge which the Snake forms over the river. They are astonished at the glorious brightness with which it wonderfully glitters, illumined by the sun, for they know nothing as yet of the change which had taken place in the Snake; and they pass over in awe and silence. The beautiful literature of the last century arose upon the path of all the best efforts of the nation, promising happiness and awakening hope, and brilliantly illuminated the path to the highest goal.

On the other side the Snake follows them, the Will-o'-wisp add their presence, and all betake themselves to the park of the fair Lily. "For however many people might be in her company, they were obliged to enter and depart singly, under pain of suffering very hard severities."

This is again one of the points which would be absurd if it meant nothing for the characterization. It is a truth easily grasped that the entrance to the ideal of beauty is open to all, but that each can gain it only for himself and in the way peculiar to himself, and that the society of others is an absolute hindrance in entering this Holy of Holies.

In the park we tread the region of pure Beauty, who charms all senses at the same time, expressing herself as a force working alone, the same in all the arts, and in like manner in all their different forms. The lovely tones which she sings to the harp show themselves first as rings on the surface of the still lake, then as a light breath they set the grass and bushes in motion. Still with sadness she makes answer to the praises of the old Woman, for her canary-bird, which used to accompany her songs most delightfully and was carefully trained not to touch her, frightened by a hawk, had taken refuge in her bosom, and in a moment had died.

The signs multiply which point to a general impending catastrophe. To the change which has taken place in literature, to the significant events in the sphere of the Church, to the broadening of scientific interests, is now added an occurrence which relates to the realm of the fair Lily, and thus concerns the sphere of beauty. I do not hesitate also to lay claim to an interpretation of the dead bird and the hawk, and so much the more as the Märchen keeps both in view to its close and lets them complete their rôles. The bird is awakened to new life simultaneously with the Youth, while the hawk, rising high in the air, with the light of the sun reflected from the mirror, awakens the companions of the Lily, and spreads heavenly brightness about the young lord. The Lily herself, as much as she mourns the death of the bird, sees in it a good omen for the future and is confidently strengthened in this hope by the Snake, since "the time is at hand." The harmless singer, which Beauty herself had taught, is driven to death by a stronger, rougher bird; and it brings this fate upon itself, for, instead of flying about Beauty in joyous sport, fleeing from the hawk, it takes refuge in her bosom.

I remarked above that in these happily chosen symbols and in the relations in which they are placed to one another there is something inexhaustible which always prompts to new thoughts. So here Beauty cannot protect her favorites, but rather hastens on their destruction, if they do not know how to meet the events, demands, and dangers which come upon them from without otherwise than by a closer adherence to her. Precisely that altogether pernicious result which comes of effort directed exclusively to æsthetic ends, a subject upon which so much has since been said, is

here expressed in the plainest manner in the figure of the Lily whose touch brings death.

But we have now reached the point where the events prepare for the last grievous catastrophe, and here the mind of the poet looked into the future with wonderful clearness. All the manifold forces of the nation intent on earnest and eager activity cannot prevent the fatal calamity; death impends even over the beautiful Youth; and as a harbinger of the storm, making known the coming disaster, there appears in the realm of the fair Lily that bird of prey, which silences the song of her darling. The thought of the poet presents itself to me as follows: This nation must meet with disaster before it can rise to its full power; but afterward the time will come—and this time is near—when, by a united effort of all its spiritual forces, it will also win for itself outward force, a position of strength, and a well-ordered government, without which the most spiritual people can no more flourish than can the soul without the body. I do not say that Goethe foresaw Jena and the war for freedom. By no means! Those crushing blows went far beyond his expectations. But he had before his eyes the dissolution of the Empire in those years of the Revolution (of this I spoke above), and the times had become terribly earnest about him. The peaceful calm of æsthetic labor and pleasure was destroyed by other and more difficult cares than songs and poems required—by questions which demanded immediate practical solution. Before these harsh demands it seemed that the Muses must be silent, but only to awake again in a more beautiful future. This strong patriotic feeling, which silences lyrical strains, is the hawk which frightens the beloved singer to death. The day arrived when this became a reality for Germany. Must not the friends of Beauty have mourned over this so long as the confidence was still lacking to them with which the other tendencies of the national spirit looked forward to the fulfilment of their common hopes?

Thus the lamentation of the fair Lily, which must otherwise seem extremely absurd, becomes perfectly intelligible and most significant to me; and I can thoroughly understand how Goethe could quote its closing lines with the greatest earnestness in the letter to Schiller which I mentioned above:

“What can these many signs avail me ?
 My singer’s death, the coal-black hand ?
 This dog of onyx, that can never fail me ?
 And coming at the Lamp’s command ?

“From human joys removed forever,
 With sorrows compassed round I sit :
 Is there a temple at the river ?
 Is there a bridge ? Alas, not yet !”

“‘The prophecy of the bridge is fulfilled,’ cried the Snake ; ‘you may ask this worthy dame ! What formerly was untransparent jasper, or agate, allowing but a gleam of light to pass by its edges, is now become transparent precious stone. No beryl is so clear, no emerald so beautiful of hue.’

“‘I wish you joy of it,’ said the Lily ; ‘but you will pardon me if I regard the prophecy as yet unaccomplished. The lofty arch of your bridge can still but admit only foot-passengers ; and it is promised us that horses and carriages and travellers of every sort shall, at the same moment, cross the bridge in both directions. Is there not something said, too, about pillars, which are to arise themselves from the waters of the river ?’”

Could a picture speak more plainly and eloquently ? However beautiful and refined literature may become, it cannot satisfy the great mass of mankind so long as it is the exclusive possession of individuals who are able to reach on its arch the realm of perfect ideas. No, it is to become a common good of all, to offer itself to all, to become attainable by all. Then will the pillars which afford the arch lasting strength and endurance arise of themselves out of the earth beneath it ! If the need of the new spiritual teaching has once fastened its roots in the hearts of the people, then will the fruit be renewed forever, and increase a hundred-fold.

It is also a thoroughly consistent carrying out of the picture that the fair Lily sends the little dead singer to the Man with the Lamp, that he may change it into beautiful onyx, and that she may then endow it with life again.

If, amid the more earnest and pressing work of the nation upon its political up-building, lyrical production suffers a decline, theoretical reflection is so much the more eagerly engaged in holding

fast the æsthetic treasures that have been won and in making them lastingly useful. Nevertheless, they can never obtain life save from the touch of that feeling for beauty to which in the first place they owed their existence.

The Snake turns the attention of the fair Lily to that political work of the future: the temple is built, although it still reposes in the depths of the earth; but the words have already resounded in it, "The time is at hand."

A pause occurs in the narrative, as if in expectation of the coming catastrophe. The attendants of the Lily, beautiful and fascinating beyond expression, and yet not to be compared with the Lily herself, are busily engaged in serving her. In them we shall later on recognize the representatives of the arts; but here, for the present, they appear only as proper attendants in suitable service about the exalted beauty. Here, as in what follows, in the innocent play with Mops, now restored to life by her touch, in the anger of the Youth at it, which brings on the catastrophe, for he throws himself in despair upon the fair Lily and falls to the earth deprived of life by her touch—in all this the narrative moves forward like a true epic; and it would be preposterous to seek out in all these details the course of the thoughts which lie beneath the whole. Only now and then in a proper place a word recalls the allegorical meaning. Thus that remark upon the beauty of the attendants of the Lily; thus the circumstance that the Youth bears the hawk upon his hand, calling it the companion of his woe, for indeed it also is injured by the look of the fair Lily—the vigorous soaring of the political epoch now announcing itself being obstructed by the power of æsthetic culture, which still rules alone.

The following scene is beautiful and affecting beyond description. I shall not attempt to accompany each particular with my comments, but will let the poem speak for itself. If in itself, with each advancing step, it continually moves and elevates the soul more deeply, these sensations affect the reader with much greater power, if the perfectly individualized characters of the story, which here also unfolds itself in a perfectly individual manner, have long since become the familiar symbols of those great all-moving thoughts:

"The misery had happened. The sweet Lily stood motionless,

gazing on the corpse. Her heart seemed to stop in her bosom, and her eyes were without tears. . . . Her silent despair did not look round for help; *she knew not of any help.*"

"On the other hand, the Snake bestirred herself the more actively; she seemed to meditate deliverance; and in fact her strange movements served at least to keep away, for a little, the immediate consequences of mischief. With her limber body she formed a wide circle around the corpse, and seizing the end of her tail with her teeth, she lay quite still."

The waiting-maids adorned the Lily; the one winding about her a shining veil, the second handing a harp to her, the third showing to her her reflection in a clear round mirror. "Sorrow heightened her beauty, the veil her charms, the harp her grace; and deeply as you wished to see her mournful situation altered, not less deeply did you wish to keep her image, as she now looked, forever present with you."

"With a still look at the mirror she touched the harp; now melting tones proceeded from the strings, now her pain seemed to mount, and the music in strong notes responded to her woe; sometimes she opened her lips to sing, but her voice failed her; and ere long her sorrow melted into tears, two maidens caught her helpfully in their arms, the harp sank from her bosom; scarcely could the quick servant snatch the instrument and carry it aside."

Could there be a more striking and more moving picture of the beauty of grief, illustrating how, in the distress of the fatherland, when the joyous and innocent songs of Nature have long since been silenced, mourning Art glorifies even her complaints through the features of beauty, and continues to give them expression in painting, in music, or in the veil of poesy, till deadly fatigue seizes upon her also?

"Who brings us the **Man with the Lamp**?" hisses the Snake, The maidens look at one another hopelessly, the Lily's tears fall faster, and the old Woman with the basket comes back breathless. and complaining that she is not able to pay her debt to the Ferryman, and fears being maimed forever.

In the general confusion the Snake gives advice to all. She asks the Will-o'-wisp to bring the **Man with the Lamp** to the spot. "Alas the beam of the sinking sun was already gilding

only the highest summits of the trees in the thicket, and long shadows were stretching over lake and meadow; the Snake hitched up and down impatiently, and Lily dissolved in tears."

I will break off here for a moment, in order to refer to a letter of Goethe's which calls vividly to mind this situation of the Märchen. It is among the letters to Friedrich August Wolf, which Michael Bernays made public, and is dated November 28, 1806. In this letter Goethe encourages him, in the bitter distress of the fatherland, to maintain his own strength, and thereby that of so many others, by so much richer and more spiritual activity. In the excellent introduction to these letters Bernays expresses himself as follows:

"When all things about him seemed to have fallen asunder and crumbled to pieces, Goethe was chiefly concerned with unshaken courage in saving and upholding whatever gave worth to his existence. He made use of the first moment which again offered a longed-for activity; for only the man of action makes himself master of himself and of the unfavorable influence of the moment. As his papers were uninjured, he devoted himself eagerly to the continuation of his extensive labors, and busied himself especially in collecting and arranging all that he had thought and marked out with regard to important problems of natural science. And as he himself found strength and consolation in incessant work, so he ceased not to exhort others also to similar application. Everywhere, as far as the circle of his activity reached, he exerted himself by word and deed to comfort, help, and encourage. He wished above all that the spiritual activity of the nation should not stagnate. As the political power of Germany seemed to him to be ruined, so he wished that the spiritual life of the nation should gird itself with greater strength, should arise to the noblest and most strenuous efforts, and thereby win recognition from the foreign conqueror."

The author adds a communication of Fernow's, of January 7, 1807, to Bottinger upon Goethe's opinions and expressions: "Let Germany have now only one great and holy purpose—to hold together in spirit, and, in the general ruin, at least most zealously to guard the as yet uninjured Palladium of our literature."

At the right moment there appears to the waiting ones the Man with the Lamp, impelled by the spirit of the Lamp, "which

sparkles when he is needed," and guided by the hawk, which, sailing high in the air, caught the last beams of the setting sun. How beautifully does the soaring of patriotism serve as guide to science, that it may hasten with help before intolerable corruption shall seize upon the prostrate body of the nation!

"Whether I can help, I know not," says the old man; "an individual helps not, but he who combines with many at the proper hour. We will postpone the evil and keep hoping."

The sun had set, but the darkness was lighted by the Snake and the Lamp; "and also the veil of the Lily gave out a soft light, which gracefully tinged, as with a meek dawning red, her pale cheeks and her white robe. The party looked at one another silently reflecting; care and sorrow were mitigated by a sure hope." This also was afterward fulfilled, and in a much more glorious manner than Goethe could have then anticipated. Illuminated by the soft light of science, warmed by the life-breath of an ideal literature, glorified by the radiance of beauty, thus the time travelled in quiet hope to meet the deeds which, after the night of humiliation, brought on the morning of national resurrection.

What follows is also true: if the following time corresponded in so many respects to the anticipatory pictures of the Märchen, *one must still be on his guard against wishing to find in reality a fulfilment of them in all their details, a fulfilment in the same time and in the same mutual relations.* Much came to pass later, much *we are now in the midst of*; but the Märchen brings all into one view and into one narrative, unfolding itself at one time. It must also be remembered that if, on the one hand, the events have come to pass in far grander fashion than Goethe could have then foreseen, on the other hand, in developments of so lofty a nature, long pauses intervene when things are at a standstill. Of all these questions of how, when, and how long, such a composition as the Märchen, from its very nature, can take no notice. It suffices it, by means of the poetic imagination, to give bodily form to the working forces and their mutual relations, and to bring them to view in a free treatment. Thus moving about in perfect peace in the regions of intelligible speculation, it gains also the freedom of perfect humor, which allows it, amidst the deep earnestness of tragic pathos, to maintain a sharpness and

clearness of view for the shortcomings of things, and, without losing a kindly valuation of their worth, to enlighten these shortcomings with the playfulness of comic contrast.

At this expectant moment of the narrative the Will-o'-wisp, who meantime had become extremely meagre, make their entrance. They behave themselves very prettily toward the Lily and her attendants; "with great tact and expressiveness they said a multitude of rather common things." They are especially eloquent in praise of the Lily's beauty. The old Woman alone is worried, and, in spite of the assurance of her husband "*that her hand can diminish no further while the lamp shines on it*," she more than once declares that if things go on thus, before midnight this noble member will have vanished.

The Man with the Lamp had listened attentively to the conversation of the Lights, and was gratified that the Lily had been cheered in some measure and amused by it.

If a special interpretation is here demanded, let it be given in a few words. The spirit of enlightenment, after having performed such important services, devotes itself to an æsthetic philosophy with somewhat diminished powers. By a superior criticism, however, it is not undervalued in the present and is marked out for important services in the future, as the *Märchen* later on shows. So also it is assured the Church by the light of pure knowledge that she is indestructible in her legitimate position, though amidst manifold distresses she be disturbed by grievous cares and give utterance to her apprehensions all too anxiously.

At the departure, the old man with solemn words admonishes them each to perform his task and his duty on the other side of the river, for the hour has now come. Only the three maidens remain behind, for they had fallen asleep, "and one could not blame them, for it was late." "'Take the mirror,' said the old man to the hawk; 'and with the first sunbeam illuminate the three sleepers and awake them with light reflected from above.'" If the arts can take no part in deciding the battle, the patriotic spirit awakens them after the victory to a new and more beautiful life.

The place is most curiously illuminated by the many lights of the party; and they now pass over the river on the arch of the helpful Snake, which shines more beautifully than ever before.

It is literature that opens the way into the life of the people to all these collected and matured spiritual forces of the nation and builds the bridge that leads them to the scene of practical activity.

The old Ferryman views with astonishment the gleaming circle and the strange lights which are passing over it. They, in truth, are engaged in ushering in a world of which till then the old state had had no inkling.

"The old man stooped toward the Snake and asked her: 'What hast thou resolved upon?'

"'To sacrifice myself rather than be sacrificed,' replied the Snake; 'promise me that thou wilt leave no stone on shore.'"

Her body crumbles into thousands and thousands of shining jewels, which the old man throws into the river. "Like gleaming, twinkling stars the stones floated down with the waves; and you could not say whether they lost themselves in the distance or sank to the bottom." Out of them arise the pillars of the bridge, which builds itself and will evermore connect the shores. The allegory is easily understood.

None the less what follows:

"'Gentlemen,' said he with the lamp in a respectful tone to the Lights, 'I will now show you the way and open you the passage; but you will do us an essential service if you please unbolt the door by which the sanctuary must be opened at present and which none but you can unfasten.' With their pointed flames the Lights ate both bar and bolt of the brazen doors of the temple so that they sprang open with a loud clang, and the figures of the kings appeared within the sanctuary." Thus it is these representatives of the restless spiritual movement of the press, incessantly receiving the new and unweariedly occupied in bringing it into practice, which, attended by Science, bring it to pass that the political thoughts which have become familiar to them acquire shape and enter into life.

The temple is opened, but it does not yet stand at the river!

"'Whence come ye?' asked the gold king.

"'From the world,' said the old man.

"'Whither go ye?' said the silver king.

"'Into the world,' replied the old man.

"'What would ye with us?' cried the brazen king.

“‘Accompany you,’ replied the man.

“‘Take yourselves away from me, my metal was not made for you,’ said the golden king to the Lights. Thereupon they turned to the silver king and clasped themselves about him; and his robe glittered beautifully in their yellow brightness.

“‘You are welcome,’ said he; ‘but I cannot feed you. Satisfy yourselves elsewhere and bring me your light.’”

Is it too much to say that *each word* of Goethe's composition is significantly and thoughtfully chosen? And do not the thoughts which belong to the circle of ideas before mentioned present themselves in completeness in the smallest part of its beautiful structure? Sometimes, however, the connecting parts are invented by an independent imagination according to the laws of beauty governing the representation; but here, toward the close of the *Märchen*, almost everything is symbolic in the most pregnant sense.

“The Lights removed, and gliding past the brazen king, *who did not seem to notice them*, they fixed on the compounded king. ‘Who will govern the world?’ cried he with a broken voice.

“‘He who stands upon his feet,’ replied the old man.

“‘I am he,’ said the mixed king.

“‘We shall see,’ replied the old man, ‘for the time is at hand.’”

It is very soon shown in regard to the mixed king, that excellent type of the Holy Roman Empire, that the time is at hand, and that he can stand upon his feet no longer, however bitter it may be to him to acknowledge it.

In the meantime, while the Lily, who is greatly pleased to hear the fateful words for the third time, is thanking the old man most heartily, the promise is fulfilled in a most wonderful manner; for the temple comes forth from the depths of the earth, passes under the river, and mounts up on the other bank, so that at last it “stands on the river.”

The dream of a united government, containing in itself the ideal good, becomes a reality.

A peculiar and very significant circumstance at this point of the narrative demands a brief comment.

In its ascent, the temple tears from the ground the hut of the old man and takes it within itself, and the hut, as it sinks down,

covers the old man and the Youth. By virtue of the Lamp locked up in it, the hut is converted from the inside to the outside into silver; also its form changes, and, losing its accidental shape, it spreads out into a noble case of beaten workmanship. "Thus a fair little temple stood erected in the middle of the large one; or, if you will, an altar worthy of the temple." From within mounts aloft the noble Youth, lighted by the Man with the Lamp, and a man in a white robe with a silver rudder in his hand supports him.

A wonderful passage and thoroughly characteristic of Goethe.

The existing state is not destroyed in revolutionary manner to make way to the state of the future; a *tabula rasa* is not made of existing political forms, which still make communication possible from the side of ideal forces to the people; but on the spot where in miserable and accidental forms the hut of the old provisional government had been built arises the perfect glory of the noble temple; and this new state, taking into itself the forms of the old order, supplies them with propelling and creative life, which penetrates them with rejuvenating power, which transfigures them and fashions them anew.

During this time the old Woman is less affected by these great events than she is anxious about her hand, which, in fact, has been growing smaller and smaller.

"'Am I then to be unhappy after all?' she cried. 'Among so many miracles can there be nothing done to save my hand?' Her husband pointed to the open door and said to her: 'See, the day is breaking; haste, bathe thyself in the river.' 'What an advice!' she cried; 'it will make me all black; it will make me vanish altogether, for my debt is not yet paid.' 'Go,' said the old man, 'and do as I advise thee; all debts are now paid.'"

It is impossible to approach in words of interpretation the beauty and depth of the poetical picture.

"See, the day is breaking!" cries clearness of perception to the old church, which stands still frightened and trembling in the presence of the new forms, fearing from them further danger and abridgment.

"Haste, bathe thyself in the river! All debts are paid!" In the renewed and rejuvenated life of the people, it is promised the Church that, if she will become free from faults, she will no longer

be in debt to this people, but, herself rejuvenated, will forever belong to it.

By the light of the rising sun the old man stepped up to the Youth. “‘There are three,’ he cried, which have rule on earth—Wisdom, Appearance, and Strength.’ At the first word the gold king rose; at the second the silver one; and at the third the brass king slowly rose, while the mixed king on a sudden very awkwardly plumped down.” When the Lights have completely eaten up the golden veins in him, he crushes together into an inorganic heap. “He was not sitting, he was not lying, he was not leaning, but shapelessly sunk together.” The type of the old German Empire, which, before the rise of New Germany, had fallen miserably to pieces and become the derision of the whole world.

Now follows the noble consecration of the king, the beauty of which I will refrain from marring by a single word of interpretation.

“The Man with the Lamp now led the handsome Youth, who still kept gazing vacantly before him, down from the altar and straight to the brazen king. At the feet of this mighty monarch lay a sword in a brazen sheath. The young man girt it round him.

“‘The sword on the left, the right free!’ cried the strong king. They next proceeded to the silver king; he bent his sceptre to the Youth; the latter seized it with the left hand, and the king in a pleasing voice said: ‘Feed the sheep!’ On turning to the golden king, he stooped with gestures of paternal blessing, and, pressing his oaken garland on the young man’s head, said: ‘Understand what is highest!’

“During the progress the old man had carefully observed the prince. After girding on the sword, his breast swelled, his arms waved, and his feet trod firmer; when he took the sceptre in his hand his strength appeared to soften, and by an unspeakable charm to become still more subduing; but as the oaken garland came to deck his hair, his features kindled, his eyes gleamed with inexpressible spirit, and the first word of his mouth was ‘Lily!’

“‘Dearest Lily!’ cried he, hastening up the silver stairs to her, for she had viewed his progress from the pinnacle of the altar—‘dearest Lily! what more precious can a man, equipped with all

desire for himself than innocence and the still affection which thy bosom brings me?’

“‘O my friend!’ continued he, turning to the old man and looking at the three statues, ‘glorious and secure is the kingdom of our fathers; but thou hast forgotten the fourth power, which rules the world earlier, more universally, more certainly—the power of love.’

“With these words he fell upon the maiden’s neck; she had cast away her veil, and her cheeks were tinged with the fairest, most imperishable red.

“Here the old man said with a smile: ‘Love does not rule, but it trains, and that is more.’”

If any one is surprised that the fair Lily is here called the “power of love,” since she has hitherto appeared as truth presenting itself in the form of pure beauty, let him call to mind, in order to appreciate the full meaning of the passage, Schiller’s philosophy of beauty, with which Goethe sympathized so completely in those years of their intimate friendship; let him remember that Schiller’s æsthetical letters were published in the same issue of the “Horen” in which the Märchen appeared. When the new monarch, having wisdom, majesty, and strength, still feels the need in his realm of the power which rules the world earlier, more universally, and more certainly—that power is meant which, winning the affection of men and taking possession of their souls, leads them sooner and more immediately to morality and voluntary submission to the sway of justice and virtue than the law and the might of the state could compel them to such submission. The leading thought in the work of Schiller and Goethe might be thus expressed: Pure beauty is the truth which, having assumed a sensible form, through it takes possession of men’s souls with quiet but irresistible power; if it succeeds in taking up its abode among a people, it then allies itself as a mighty companion with those supreme forces which regulate and maintain the whole, enkindling love for all that is good, noble, and great—indeed, it is this love. *Æsthetic culture alone cannot compensate for a lack of discipline in the state, but to a genuine national government it becomes the most glorious ornament and a mighty support: it cannot rule; but it trains, and that is more.*

It was now broad day, and over the river stretched for all time

the strong and beautiful bridge with porches and colonnades, affording a safe passage to the thousands who flowed like streams in both directions without hindering each other.

"Remember the Snake in honor," said the Man with the Lamp; "thou owest her thy life; thy people owe her the bridge by which these neighboring banks are now animated and combined into one land. Those swimming and shining jewels, the remains of her sacrificed body, are the piers of this royal bridge; upon these she has built and will maintain herself."

Now there enter the temple the Lily's beautiful attendants, whom the hawk with the mirror has awakened to new life. With them is an unknown one, more beautiful than the others, who in sisterly sportfulness hastens with them through the temple and mounts the steps of the altar. Both the Man with the Lamp and the old Woman have renewed their youth and taken on a noble beauty, and they make anew their compact, that united they will live together for a thousand years to come.

We are at the end.

In union with *Wisdom* and the venerable principle of *revered Majesty, Power* has founded a new kingdom. *Truth, transfigured as Beauty*, stands by the side of the new monarch, his most trusted helper and companion, and, in imperishable youth, she ever urges him to place the strength of his rule upon the foundation of the culture of a noble morality, which, through the power of *beautiful and pure love*, streams everywhere from the royal pair throughout the whole people. Nearest to their throne stands the power to which they owe so much—the still-illuminating, wonder-working *light of Science*; in closest union with Science is *Religion*; by means of the all-awakening and life-giving power of the ideal national government, which is at last established, both are filled with new and youthful vigor for renewed and active work, which will extend into far-distant epochs. In high honor in the new state is the power which receives the spiritual blessings thus won, fashions them with creative force, and spreads them abroad—namely, *Literature*; it stands forever now as the *strong bridge* which furnishes to *all* an unobstructed passage to these blessings. Since its noble powers first turned to the people and spread among them, its noble edifice has sprung up from the very midst of the people. Also the joyous *songs of popular origin*,

which died away before the breath of the new spirit, are awakened to new life with the new birth of the national genius, and the blow of the hawk's wing no longer terrifies the harmless little singer; and even the hawk is no longer hateful to the fair Lily. "Soaring high aloft above the dome, the hawk caught the light of the sun and reflected it upon the group which was standing upon the altar. The king, the queen, and their attendants, in the dusty conclave of the temple, seemed illuminated by a heavenly splendor, and the people fell upon their faces."

Thus, then, the many forces, of whose influence the Märchen treats, attain in beautiful union their common goal. Only of Mops no further mention is made. The fair Lily, who, to the great disgust of the Youth, had played so eagerly with him, had at the entrance into the temple taken him upon her arm; from this point we lose sight of him altogether.

I cannot refrain from expressing here a conjecture which particularizes the general meaning of this symbol as given above. This Mops with which the fair Lily plays so gracefully and which the Youth finds so disgusting—might he not be a humorous and satirical reference to the beginnings of romanticism, which began plainly to develop about the middle of the nineties of the last century? At least it is certain that this arose from the *transmission of the mysticism of the Church, which was shattered by the spirit of enlightenment, into the æsthetic realm*; and this also is certain: if Goethe, on the one hand, judged objectively enough to assign a certain æsthetic value to the romantic productions, on the other hand he certainly felt toward this movement as the Youth did when he saw Mops in the arms of the fair Lily.

However this may be, in the state now attained to its power there is no place for this mystical romanticism.

With regard to the last figure of which we have to speak—would that the course of events might correspond to the optimistic way in which the Märchen lets him find his appointed end!

The great Giant, who knows nothing of the bridge, stupefied with sleep, reels over it, and causes with the shadow of his huge fists harm and confusion among the crowds of people who are surging back and forth. "The king, as he saw this mischief, grasped with an involuntary movement at his sword; but he thought himself, and looked calmly at his sceptre, then at the

lamp and the rudder of his attendants." Against the pernicious figure of superstition power can do nothing, and, advised by prudence, the injured majesty of the state looks back upon historical tradition, and so checks the rash movement of his anger. These phantoms, restricted to narrow bounds by all the active and salutary forces of the rejuvenated nation, shall of themselves lose their injurious power, and henceforth show themselves serviceable and helpful to the whole.

"‘We and our gifts are powerless against this powerless monster,’ said the Man with the Lamp. ‘Be calm! He is doing hurt for the last time, and happily his shadow is not turned to us.’

"He was walking straight to the door of the temple, when all at once in the middle of the court he halted, and was fixed to the ground. He stood there like a strong colossal statue, of reddish glittering stone, and his shadow pointed out the hours, which were marked in a circle on the floor around him, not in numbers, but in noble and expressive emblems."

May the day soon come when such an end will overtake the phantoms which still cause so much mischief and confusion in our national life! Impenetrable are they to the rays of knowledge; the sword may not be unsheathed against them; but the healthy forces of the nation may shut them up within limits which shall be continually more restricted on all sides, until their power to harm is taken away; and, since they are inextirpably rooted in human nature, they may still serve, by the direction in which they extend, significantly, like heralds, to call attention to the changes and developments which arise and complete themselves in the nation's life.